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"HYSTERIA" - Lippmann

West Germany and France are the main obstacles to a negotiated solution of the West Berlin problem, the noted US publicist Walter Lippmann warned in an article in the "New York Herald Tribune" on October 17th. Here are some of the main points which he made in his important article:

"We are at the beginning of Act II of the Berlin crisis. The Western Allies must try to find a negotiating position on which they can agree. It will not be easy to do this. For in West Germany, in France, and in this country there are powerful and passionate opponents of any negotiations . . .

"It is quite possible that the intransigents will prevail in the sense that Bonn and Paris will be able for the present to impose a veto upon Washington and London. The (West) German press is crying out that President Kennedy is preparing to betray Germany, and the West German Foreign Minister has made it known that in the view of his government there are no negotiable points.

"No doubt these hysterical cries about betrayal must not be taken too grimly and too literally. For the (West) Germans are in a state of shock. For the first time after years of soft promises and self-deception they have to face the realities of the partition of Germany. What they are crying out for now is that we must refuse to negotiate about anything so that they may go on for awhile longer to dream that as a leading member of the Western Alliance they will eventually liberate and absorb Eastern Germany.

"It may be that by going to the brink of thermonuclear war we can gain some time for the West Germans to turn over in bed and have another nap . . .

"It is possible that Khrushchov would draw away from war even if we refuse to negotiate with him. But where the intransigents cannot be right is the notion, which is the heart of the matter, that if nothing is changed about Berlin by negotiation, nothing will be changed about Berlin.

"This is the radical fallacy of the so-called hard-boiled school . . . West Berlin has now ceased to be . . . a show window to East Berlin of the affluence and freedom of West Germany. It has ceased to be a fulcrum for the liberation of East Germany. Unless some kind of future for this half-city is provided by negotiation, West Berlin will be a derelict ship which is running out of fuel and has lost her rudder . . .

"The truth is that West Berlin is today a stricken city without a future, and to negotiate is not to surrender what we have but to bargain for much that is necessary and that we do not have. What we do not have is a viable future for West Berlin.

"We cannot have a viable future for West Berlin unless we can negotiate a contractual agreement with the Soviet Union."

IF THE WEST IS READY . . .

Mr K Foresees Postponement of Peace Treaty

If the western powers show readiness to solve the German problem, then the signature of a peace treaty with the GDR might be postponed until next year, Soviet Prime Minister Khrushchov stated in his key-note address to the 22nd Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on October 17th. He stressed, however, that the signature of a peace treaty could not long be delayed.

Here are some of the points on Germany made by Khrushchov in the course of his far-ranging key-note speech:

"Only a few years ago no western politician would have dared even to suggest the arming of a West German Bundeswehr, because this could have wrecked his career. Today, however, the militarisation of West Germany is in full swing, and the West German Bundeswehr has become the strongest military force in western Europe. West German War Minister Strauss boasts that West Germany not only belongs to NATO, but that it commands NATO.

"In addition, something unbelievable has happened. The Governments of Britain and France, which suffered under German militarism, have granted the Bundeswehr training grounds and have placed their own forces under the command of former Hitler generals. We share the feeling of bitterness of the French and British patriots who see the West German revanchists marching in their homelands . . .

"A matter of the greatest importance for the maintenance of peace is the problem of getting rid of the remnants of the Second World War. We cannot be satisfied with a situation in which no peace has been concluded with Germany 16 years after the victory over Hitlerite fascism. The western powers, led by

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the USA, are solely responsible for this inexcusable delay. Immediately after the end of the war, ignoring the interests of the peoples, they began the path leading to the re-birth of German militarism.

"The revanchists of Bonn have already utilised the lack of a peace treaty. With the help of the American imperialists they have created a new aggressive army. The West German militarists would like to utilise the unsettled state of affairs in Europe in order to provoke a clash between their former opponents, the powers of the Anti-Hitler Coalition. They dream of absorbing the German Democratic Republic, conquering other neighbouring lands, and taking revenge for their defeat in the Second World War.

"We take the view that a peace treaty finally fixing the German frontiers laid down in the Potsdam Agreement would tie the hands of the revanchists and prevent them from launching new adventures. The socialist countries have delayed for a long time with the signature of a peace treaty, hoping that good sense will get the upper hand in Washington, London and Paris. We are still ready today to work out, together with the western powers, an acceptable solution.

"The recent conversations between Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko and American and British statesmen have given us the impression that the western powers have a certain understanding of the situation, and that they are inclined to seek a solution of the German problem and the West Berlin problem on a basis acceptable to both sides...

"A German peace treaty must and will be signed, either together with the western powers, or without them.

"On the basis of this treaty the status of West Berlin will be normalised as a demilitarised Free City. The western states and all countries should have the right of access to West Berlin in accordance with normal international procedure, that is to say they will have to reach the relevant agreement with the Government of the German Democratic Republic, through whose territory all access routes to West Berlin pass.

"Some representatives of the western powers have described as an ultimatum our proposal that the German peace treaty should be signed this year. This is not true. The proposal of the Soviet Union to conclude a peace treaty and convert West Berlin into a Free City was made in 1958. We have not forced the solution of this problem since we hoped to reach agreement with the western powers. Does this look like an ultimatum? The Soviet Union has not presented an ultimatum, but proceeds from the necessity of finally solving this problem which has long been ripe for solution.

"The Soviet Union still insists on the speediest solution of the German problem. It is opposed to delaying this solution endlessly. If the western powers show readiness to solve the German problem, then the question of the date for the signature of a German peace treaty would not be of such importance. We shall not then insist on signing this treaty before December 31st 1961. The main thing is that the problem should be solved, that the remnants of the Second World War should be swept away, and that a German peace treaty should be signed.

"The solution of this problem clears the way for further steps towards peaceful cooperation between the states. What must be done, apart from signing a German peace treaty, to make peace more secure?

"A considerable improvement in the mechanism of the United Nations is long overdue... The time has come to solve the problem of the representation of the German people in the United Nations. In the present situation the most sensible solution would be to conclude a peace treaty with the two German states which actually exist, and take them into the United Nations."

Ulbricht Details GDR Position

Walter Ulbricht, Chairman of the Council of State in the GDR, explained his country's position regarding negotiation in a speech to the 22nd Communist Party Congress in Moscow. Here is an excerpt from his speech:

In the present discussions about a German peace treaty, the ruling circles in West Germany and Paris are clearly attempting to postpone negotiations as long as possible. In view of the present situation in West Germany, these manoeuvres can only be aimed at gaining time to achieve a fait accompli by arming the West German army of revenge with atomic weapons. In our opinion, leading American politicians are also wasting their time when they try to achieve certain positions for negotiations which would undermine the GDR and the other socialist countries. We hope that the governments of the western powers analyse the situation realistically and are willing to cooperate without delays in removing the hotbed of war danger in West Germany and West Berlin and, in the interests of peace, in normalising their relationship with the German Democratic Republic in the spirit of the United Nations Charter.

The German Democratic Republic wishes to have a peace treaty signed as rapidly as possible so that peace may be guaranteed. We are willing to agree that neither of the two German states should receive atomic weapons or have the right to produce atom weapons. We are in agreement with the total and general disarmament in both German states, especially since the democratic Germany of tomorrow only has a future as a militarily neutral country. We are for a non-aggression pact between the NATO and the countries of the Warsaw Treaty. We are for the acceptance of both German states in the UN.

These measures would contribute to maintaining peace in Europe. They also correspond fully with the interests of the people of West Germany. As for us, we shall spare no efforts in building up further the German Democratic Republic, the strong bastion of peace and socialism, and in winning over all the people of Germany for the creation of a militarily neutral Germany.

Ghana Pact OK'd

A government delegation from Ghana visited the GDR in mid-October and signed long term trade and payment agreements as well as agreements on future cultural exchanges and technical and scientific cooperation.

The group of 22 delegates was headed by Krobo Edusei, Minister of Light and Heavy Industry, and included Mr L. R. Abavana, Minister of Agriculture as well as other MPs and party and government leaders.

At a reception in honour of the Ghanaian guests in East Berlin, Minister Edusei praised the readiness of the GDR to help the people of Ghana in their struggle to strengthen their national and economic independence. He also invited MPs from the GDR to visit his country.

Both groups agreed that the discussions had brought the two countries much closer, and that they had found themselves to be in agreement on very many questions.

Old Gang Back in Bonn

The West German Bundestag elected on September 17th is crowded with ex-nazis, old Wehrmacht officers, big businessmen and Junker landlords. Well over 100 of the 499 members were nazi-appointed members of the Hitler government or its economic, judicial and educational branches; 49 were officers in Hitler's Wehrmacht. Many share in the guilt for deportations, pogroms and war crimes. Many of the MP's are members of reactionary veterans and militarist organisations and 62 are leaders in groups calling for the West German conquest of countries of Eastern Europe. More than 160 represent business enterprises in which they are owners or members of the board of directors.

Here is a sampling of some of the men sitting in the new Bundestag:

CDU = Christian Democratic Union (Adenauer's party)
CSU = Christian Social Union (Bavarian branch of CDU)
SPD = Social Democratic Party
FDP = Free Democratic Party

Achenbach, Dr Ernst (FDP)
During the war chief of the political department of Hitler's embassy in occupied Paris. In a report to Berlin on February 15th 1943, he described a French resistance attack and stated: "As a first measure of punishment it is planned to arrest 2000 Jews and deport them to the east."

Bausch, Paul (CDU)
Member of Reichstag 1930 to 1933, affiliated with Reichstag fraction of nazi party; voted Hitler dictatorial powers in May 1933. Official in Wuerttemberg provincial government during nazi period.

Bismarck, Prince Otto von (CDU)
From 1927 till 1936 Embassy Counsellor at German Embassy in London; 1937 to 1940 Director of Political Section of nazi Foreign Ministry; Minister attached to German Embassy in Rome until August 1943.

Blank, Theodor (CDU)
Told Bundestag on June 27th 1955: "The German soldier always did his duty courageously, uprightly and obediently."
Blank told German ex-servicemen on July 14th 1956: "It can still be an honour for the German youth ... to die young."

Burgbacher, Dr Fritz (CDU)
During the nazi period a member of Board of Directors in the huge Dresdner Bank which helped finance Hitler and subjugate occupied Europe.

Burgemeister, Alfred (CDU)
Joined Officer Corps in 1934, attended War Academy in Berlin in 1938. Promoted to battalion commander and later, as colonel, to infantry regiment commander on eastern front and in Balkans. At present chairman of militarist German Soldiers' Association in Helmstedt.

Conring, Dr Hermann (CDU)
Nazi governor of the Dutch province of Groningen during the war: Conring reported in May 1934 on crushing a resistance strike of Dutch workers: "The police forces which we used fulfilled their duties in an exemplary fashion ... 23 persons were shot dead and 13 were wounded."
Conring sent more than 3000 Jews from Groningen to their deaths in concentration camps.

Dresbach, August (CDU)
Worked as departmental editor on nazi newspapers 1933–1943. 1944 became deputy chief of Gau Chamber of Commerce in Cologne-Aachen.

Eschmann, Fritz (SPD)
Nazi police official, later captain in the Wehrmacht, decorated by Hitler with Knight's Cross.

Etzel, Franz (CDU)
Volunteered for Wehrmacht on first day of war, headed a battalion. After conquest of Norway, Etzel wrote friends from Oslo on August 8th 1940: "The soldiers are filled with ardour after experiencing the greatness and power of the Reich in the port of a foreign capital ..."

Friedensburg, Dr Ferdinand (CDU)
Wrote 1941 in an article called "Petroleum in the European New Order": "In assuming this historical task (the New Order of Europe, ed.) we Germans find the justification for this not only in our military victories but also from the knowledge that we are more capable than other nationalities and have learnt to give full value to the technical-economic work in the total life of the nation."

Gedat, Gustav Adolf (CDU)
In books written during the nazi period, he stated: "And the black flood already has spread to the boulevards of Paris, where white women betray their white race to men from the black continent." ("A Christian Experiences World Problems," 1933)
"God made many people to be hunters of the Jewish race – to hunt it and to bring it where God wants it! ...
"A new age, a new hope, a Fuehrer is arisen! A community is now to be built up on a foundation of racial purity and consciousness of 'Volk'. Elements of alien races must be done away with. Only Nordics have any justification." ("That Is Life Too", 1935)

Gerstenmaier, Dr Eugen (CDU)
Travelled through Scandinavia and the Balkans during the war, on secret missions for nazi Foreign Ministry. In one report to the Ministry he wrote "From September 2nd to 22nd 1941 I was commissioned by the Cultural Department of the Foreign Ministry to visit Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece and Rumania, to establish contact with the Orthodox Church ... In Bulgaria I made it clear to the two archbishops that German support in the question of the Patriarchate would depend upon the degree of activity displayed by the Bulgarian Church in anti-Bolshevist propaganda. Both archbishops promised to do what they could ..." Now President of the Bundestag.

Goetz, Dr Hermann (CDU)
Member of nazi Fifth Column which undermined Czechoslovakia, awarded nazi medal for part he played in occupation.

Gradl, Johann Baptist (CDU)
During nazi period was executive official of Association of German Savings Banks and Clearing Houses, and manager of the Reich Bankers' Group.

Haase, Lothar (CDU)
Was an officer in Heinrich Himmler's "SD" – main nazi secret service organisation.

Hoecherl, Hermann (CSU)
State prosecutor in nazi court in Regensburg in 1938.

Hoogen, Matthias (CDU)
Practiced law in Krefeld during nazi period. 1942 to 1945 nazi mili-

tary court prosecutor, final rank general staff judge.

Jaeger, Dr Richard (CSU)

1940 judicial assessor at nazi court in Weilheim, 1943 junior judge. Told the Bundestag on June 28th 1955: "In a nation like ours, which has a soldierly tradition, the question will be raised as to what our attitude is toward our national tradition in the military field ... There can be no doubt that the outstanding personalities of the Prussian state contributed real moral values to our tradition."

On September 19th 1956 he wrote: "The important thing is to set up an army of the quality of the earlier German armed forces."

Jaksch, Wenzel (SPD)

For many years a leader of the so-called "Sudetenland" Germans, he stated on February 2nd 1957: "Any declarations disclaiming former German territories made today ... will tomorrow be ammunition for Polish and Czech negotiators against the claims of German refugees to their homelands."

Kempfler, Dr Fritz (CSU)

Joined Nazi Party in 1932, became a colonel in the SS. Was nazi-appointed Lord Mayor of Bayreuth from 1938 until 1945.

Kreitmeyer, Reinhold (FDP)

Colonel in the nazi Wehrmacht. Demanded on August 9th 1953 that all imprisoned war criminals be freed and declared: "The German soldier of the future must go out and win!"

Krone, Dr Heinrich (CDU)

Voted in May 1933 for the Enabling Laws which gave Hitler dictatorial powers.

Krueger, Hans (CDU)

Senior judge in nazi court in Chojnice, occupied Poland. Now president of the aggressive "Association of Refugees" organisation in West Germany.

Kuehn, Walter (FDP)

Member of the nazi party from 1933, governor of Bydgosz, occupied Poland. Today Chairman of the revanchist "League of West Prussians".

Lemmer, Ernst (CDU)

As Reichstag member voted dictatorial powers for Hitler in May 1933. As a journalist during the nazi period, Lemmer helped Goebbels' Propaganda Ministry plant articles in foreign newspapers, worked hand in hand with Goebbels during the war.

Loehr, Dr Walter (CDU)

From 1940 till 1945 "Responsible Chief for Special Questions of Chemical Production" in the nazi Armaments Ministry. Worked closely with I. G. Farben concern. Since 1945 a leader of the employers' Association of Chemical Industries.

Manteuffel-Szoege, Dr Georg Baron (CSU)

Former big landowner in eastern Poland. Told Parliament on February 24th 1955: "Germany has the mission in the world of providing the trinity of military force, the new order in the economy and the moral forces."

Menne, Dr W. Alexander (FDP)

Chairman of the Board of Directors of Hoechst Farbenwerke — one of the three daughter concerns of I. G. Farben, the huge nazi chemical monopoly. Vice-President of the Federal Association of German Industry. Menne campaigned against any West German obligation to use atomic energy for peaceful purposes only.

Merkatz, Dr Hans-Joachim von (CDU)

Member of the Nazi Party, worked during the war at the Ibero-American Institute in Berlin which was responsible for training nazi agents in Spanish-speaking countries. After the war, said: "We have gambled with the great inheritance of our grandfathers and great-grandfathers, and we have lost. Now we must win back what Bismarck and others won."

On October 16th this year, he told holders of the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross: "It is no faded distinction — you are regarded as an elite — as the aristocracy of our people ... Responsible people today are full of respect for the achievements which stand to your credit and regard you as exemplars."

Merten, Hans (SPD)

Criticised keeping war criminals in jail; "Not justice but power and policy dictated the war-crimes trials."

Meyer, Philipp (CSU)

From 1933 to 1945 full-time district leader of the Nazi Party.

Pferdmenges, Dr Robert (CDU)

Personal adviser to Adenauer, banker, director of 42 companies and said to be the richest man in West Germany. Laid foundations of his fortune by "aryanising" Jewish-owned Oppenheim banking house in Cologne. Contributed at least 389,000 marks to Nazi Party. Named as economic war criminal by Kilgore Committee of U.S. Senate in 1945, but never brought to trial.

Schmid, Dr Carlo (SPD)

During the war nazi occupation official in Lille, occupied France.

Schmidt, Dr Otto (CDU)

Prosecutor in nazi provincial and district courts during the nazi period.

Schneider, Dr Heinrich (FDP)

From 1942 to 1945 official of nazi Foreign Ministry.

Schroeder, Dr Gerhard (CDU)

Joined the Nazi Party and the Storm Troops in 1933. Stated: "The Federal Republic is the core of Germany. All other German territory is land which has been stolen from us, and which we must regain." (Industriekurier, June 13th 1953) As Interior Minister has led government attacks on communists, trade unionists, peace advocates and ex-inmates of nazi concentration camps who maintain anti-nazi position.

Schultz, Fritz-Rudolf (FDP)

Large landowner, served as an officer in the Panzer Corps; promoted to major and given the Knight's Cross with Oak Leaves by Hitler.

Seebohm, Dr Hans-Christoph (CDU)

"Aryanised" Jewish-owned coalmines in occupied Czechoslovakia. Now head of the "Landsmannschaft of Sudeten Germans" and loudest spokesman for expanding West Germany again. Known for statements such as: "The German East includes not only the Elbe and the Oder, but also Bohemia and all areas where Germans once settled." (August 1953)

Stauch, Robert (CDU)

Mayor of the town of Katzenelnbogen during entire nazi period and again since 1948.

Storch, Anton (CDU)

Stated in a speech in 1952: "If people complain that I spread fascist ideas, I do not regard this as in any way an insult. When I hear the sounds of martial music, then my heart beats higher."

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Strauss, Franz-Josef (CSU)

As Minister for Defence, has systematically established former top nazi officers in all leading West German military and naval positions, has fought to get atomic weapons for West Germany and has shown clear signs of wishing to become ruler in Bonn. Said, "We are living in a technical age in which the combined strength of our allies is sufficient to wipe the Soviet Union off the map." (November 11th 1956)

Vogel, Dr Rudolf (CDU)

Wrote these statements during the Hitler period: "The Poles are subhuman" (November 1939); "The only possible solution: all fifteen million Jews must be sent to Devil's Island." (September 9th 1939); "The inevitable process of reparation of injustices done by Versailles is now proceeding with incredible rapidity since the seizure of power and the return of the eastern territories under the courageous hand of the Fuehrer. Saarland, Ostmark (Austria), Sudeten German Gau, Bohemia and Moravia — the German revival proceeds in a rushing succession of events which robs Paris and London of their breath." (March 23rd 1939)

Weber, Dr Karl (CDU)

Practiced law in Koblenz district and provincial courts during nazi period. Nazi officer 1939—1945.

Willeke, Dr Friedrich Wilhelm (CDU)

Mayor of the town of Marl throughout the nazi period.

Wittmer-Eigenbrodt, Kurt (CDU)

Officer in World War I and II. Stated: "The achievements of the Nazi Party were in many ways not so bad, and one could wish for a Goebbels for the present government." (Frankfurter Rundschau, March 20th 1951)

Zoglmann, Siegfried (FDP)

Hitler youth district leader, then nazi journalist, leading official in the nazi occupation government of Czechoslovakia, finally a lieutenant-colonel in the black-uniformed SS and commander of a Panzer company.

Europe's Highest

A huge radio antenna tower, higher than any structure in the world outside the United States, has been built in the GDR near Berlin. The tower, completed in October, will greatly increase the range of GDR sound broadcasts. Built of parts made in the Soviet Union, it reaches a height of 1152 feet.

(Comparisons: Empire State Building — 1472 feet; Chrysler Building, New York — 1046 feet; Tokyo television tower — 1082 feet; Eiffel Tower — 984 feet; Salisbury Cathedral, England — 406 feet; St. Paul's, London — 365 feet).

Letter to "Melbourne Age"

Newspapers in all parts of the western world continually print reports about the "drab grey ruins of East Berlin". Such a report was recently published in "The Age", of Melbourne, Australia. On this page we print a letter to the editor of "The Age", commenting on this article.

I have just read with great interest the article "Startling Contrast of Two German Cities" by Gordon Melville in your issue of September 28th.

As a British journalist who has lived and worked in Berlin for the past 14 years (until 1950 as Reuters Correspondent in West Berlin, and since then in East Berlin) I would like to make a few comments.

Firstly, Mr Melville reports that East Berlin consist mostly of "deathly silence among the dilapidated walls". This shows that he apparently only visited a few streets in the central part of East Berlin, the area which was most badly damaged by the war. There are many ruins there, it is true, because the rebuilding work began in the suburbs to provide new housing, rather than banks and office buildings which in West Berlin, as in most cities, fill the city centre. If he had gone a little further he would have found huge areas of clean, pleasant and very cheap flats.

Mr Melville says that the Unter den Linden boulevard offers a "fine view of the towering Brandenburg Gate . . . but little else" and then describes ruins, gaps and truncated buildings. If he had looked more carefully, he would have found the famous State Opera House, the huge University building, a large embassy, the big Museum of German History, the State Library with its 2,000,000 books and other buildings, all newly built or restored painstakingly and at great expense since the war.

In another passage, describing the East Berlin Stalinallee, he states: "It stands in roccoco tastelessness, with nothing to back its pretensions, as the sole Communist achievement to set against the reconstruction of West Berlin."

This sentence is simply not true. The first section of the Stalin Allee, comprising more than 5000 flats, was completed in 1954; since then well over 50,000 new flats, in a more modern style, have been built in other parts of East Berlin. In fact, in recent years, the rate of construction has been higher than in West Berlin.

I would like to draw special attention to the long and spine-chilling description of how East Berlin frontier officials looked at Mr Melville's passport: "Two officers examine his passport minutely, compare his face with his photograph, look him up and down as though to be sure of remembering him".

Has Mr Melville never passed a frontier control post in any other country? I have had similar experiences in West Germany, France, Britain and many other countries. The frontier through Berlin is the state frontier of the German Democratic Republic, and normal passport control there is the most usual thing in the world.

Incidentally, admission to a country without a visa is usually arranged on a basis of reciprocity — you let our nationals in, we let your nationals in. Mr Gordon Melville was able to enter the German Democratic Republic freely on his Australian (or British) passport without applying for a visa; a journalist from the German Democratic Republic would certainly not be able to visit Melbourne without a visa — and in recent months no British or Australian visas have been extended to citizens of the German Democratic Republic, whether journalists, footballers, or artists. Mr Melville and other Western journalists have thus been granted a unilateral favour by the GDR authorities.

Mr Gordon Melville's rather one-sided complaints reminded me of a notorious case not very far back in Australian history. In mid-November 1934 the leading progressive Czechoslovak journalist Egon Erwin Kisch was refused admission to Australia in Perth, although he had a valid Australian visa. He leapt from the liner "Strathaird" in Melbourne harbour, broke his leg, and was finally allowed to stay for a short while in Australia after the High Court had ruled that the entry examination which had been given him in the Gaelic language in Sydney did not represent a fair method of testing his intelligence.

Incidentally Kisch was refused permission to land in Australia because he was an anti-Nazi, and the Nazi German diplomats in Australia brought pressure to bear on the Australian Government. I trust that the West German diplomatic service, which is largely staffed with the same men who ran it in the Nazi era, is not able to exert similar pressure in Australia today to prevent a true picture being given of conditions in the two German states.

John Peet

Amateurs at the Festival

By Helga Preuss

(The first two weeks of October saw the fifth annual theatre and music festival in East Berlin. Famous theatre and music groups came from the provinces and from Finland, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, the Soviet Union and other countries; but a distinctive feature of the festival was not only that workers formed a large part of the audiences, but that worker and student amateur theatre groups staged many of the shows. To cover this aspect of the festival, GERMAN REPORT sent out Helga Preuss, who otherwise does all the multifold secretarial and bookkeeping tasks involved in getting the paper published and dispatched to its readers. On this page you can read her report.)

During the Berlin Festival this year there were just too many things going on for one person to be able to see them all; so I concentrated on the shows staged by the various worker and student dramatic groups. There is a real story behind each of these groups. For instance, the amateur theatre group of the miners of the uranium mines in Aue was formed after the wives of the workers complained that they just did not understand what went on down the pit, and all the talk about work brigades. One of the miners started to write a short play about the subject, a professional writer gave his help, and finally the miners themselves were able to present their own play about their work not only to their wives but also to many other audiences in the area.

Four worker theatre groups were originally scheduled to attend the Berlin festival with their plays, but one group had to cancel its appearance, because all the members of the group had volunteered for the frontier troops guarding the borders of the GDR.

Let me tell you first about the most impressive of the various amateur performances which I saw. The amateur dramatic society of the Central Clubhouse of German-Soviet Friendship presented the Soviet play "A Story from Irkutsk". Before the play began, I was afraid I was going to be bored by one of the standard "girl loves boy, but boy loves tractor" epics; and my worst fears seemed to be coming true when a speaker appeared before the first act, and rambled on for forty minutes without saying any thing new or interesting. It was a real trial of everyone's patience, but then, at long last, the curtain went up, and the performance which followed made up for the boredom.

It would take too much space to tell you the story of the play here. It deals with real people at their place of work and in their leisure time, and how they meet their personal problems, for of course there are many of the old personal problems, and some new ones too, in a socialist society. Such a play has a particular appeal in a country like the German Democratic Republic, where so many of the new problems of a new social system still have to be solved.

The play was a roaring success, but a success not only with the audience but also with the players. The amateur performers had been working on the play for a full year; they had made their props themselves and worked as scene-shifters; and when they had finished, they realised that they had not only learned to play theatre, but they themselves had learned a lot from the play and its treatment of the problems of a socialist society.

This amateur group has the advantage of being led by a professional, Hella Len, who teaches at the GDR Film Academy. She told me afterwards that one of her great aims was to attract teenagers, and give them something really interesting to do in their spare time. A student, filled with his own importance, had recently visited the group and asked a young actor, bricklayer during the day: "What effect upon your political consciousness does this amateur dramatic work have". The bricklayer grinned and replied: "I don't stand around on the street corners any more, and know what to do in the evenings. Is that enough for you?"

But apart from giving people from all sorts of professions an enthralling hobby — the main part was played by a girl who has just passed her state examination as a nursery school teacher — these amateur groups are proving to be a fruitful ground for finding young people who can take up acting as a profession. Two former members of this particular group are now studying at the Film Academy, for instance.

The performance of "A Story from Irkutsk" was so successful that the group was awarded the official title of "Workers Theatre", a title held by only 3 groups in Berlin. This is not only an honour, but also brings with it a useful subsidy from the city funds for the further work of the group.

Less successful, I felt, was the performance given by the amateur theatre group of the Treptow Electric Apparatus Factory. This group performed scenes from Bertolt Brecht's "Private Life of the Master Race" on a Sunday morning in the theatre of the Berliner Ensemble. This group had been helped by the professionals of the Berliner Ensemble, easily Berlin's best professional theatre, and the professional touch could be seen all through. But perhaps this was what was wrong; the performance was an imitation of the professional performance of the same work given by highly-talented professional actors in the same theatre. That is probably the reason why the theatre was only half-filled, and why the performance, which they had prepared with such hard work, remained without real resonance.

The atmosphere was much better at the next play I went to see. This was a comedy presented by the workers' theatre of the Oberspree Cable Works at the clubhouse of the factory itself. They presented their own play for their own colleagues, and it dealt with the very live problem of men who talk a lot about equality for women in general, but do not act up to their words with their own wives. The play was well-acted, and got its points well home.

A big shortcoming of the workers' theatre movement in the GDR today appears to be that the various groups are so tied up in their own problems that they scarcely maintain contact with each other, and practically not at all with the various student theatre groups, which badly need their help.

I hope to deal with some of the performances of the student theatre groups in another article.

School Days in East Berlin (II)

By Allen Mann

The one day I spent in school was naturally not enough to get a full idea of how children are getting a cultural education. I had visited only one class in music, and that early in the school year. And yet it is common knowledge that many young people in the GDR not only prefer boogie to Beethoven (which would not be so tragic) but know little and care less about classical music, art and the like.

There are many ways to get youngsters interested in the arts. A regular programme of concerts for children is held every year in East Berlin, and is always sold out. There is also a special theatre for children and young people in East Berlin (and also in all major cities of the country). Season tickets to adult theatres and the opera are available at very low prices for the older school children. And of course there are the regular visits to museums.

All this has brought results, probably more than in many other countries. Yet I think a great deal more stress on school choruses, drama groups and orchestras would be very valuable. The oldest pupils at the school I visited recently put on a scene from a play by Bertolt Brecht for the Teachers' Day ceremony held every year in the GDR, and they were very enthusiastic. Perhaps this important kind of education — which is so much fun — can be increased in the future.

The School System

In the past in Germany there was a very sharp division between those pupils who only went to primary school, those who went on to get a secondary education and the relatively few very privileged children who continued on to technical school or university. Although there are remnants of this old system, the schooling system in the GDR has been moving away from this division constantly since 1945. Perhaps most important, it has closed all the tiny one-room schoolhouses which formerly abounded in rural areas and substituted large modern central schools for each group of villages. There are no more private or church-run parochial schools, either, and children may move from one part of the country to another without school problems.

(It might be noted that these are still problems in West Germany, where the number of one-room schools has not decreased, where public schools for Catholic and Protestant children are separated, and where there are great differences between the curricula of the different provinces, which makes trouble for children who move from one area to another. The chances of continuing education for less-privileged children are also extremely limited.)

Here is what I was told about the GDR school system by Frau Muchow, director of the school I visited in East Berlin.

After Primary School

After 8 classes of school, at 14, those children with the best marks and good general behaviour and attitude are sent to a 4-year school which prepares them for college or university. Although the children of workers are especially urged to go on, and receive the benefit of the doubt in close cases, neither the background nor things like membership or non-membership in the Free German Youth Organisation are decisive, or weightier than school results, Frau Muchow told me — despite charges of this nature by West German sources. Last year, one of the four children sent on to senior school was the daughter of a clergyman, she mentioned.

As for the main group of children, when they have finished their ten years of schooling, they become apprentices in whatever trade interests them. There are always countless openings in almost every type of work. This apprenticeship lasts three years in most cases, and includes a large amount of regular school classes in general courses and in the job being learnt.

It is not difficult for those learning a job to take classes at the so-called factory academies and pass their secondary school examinations. This is only one of the many ways to get to a higher education for young people with any interest in doing so.

Problems

I asked Frau Muchow what was the main educational problem facing her at present. "Training the children to study and learn independently," she answered, "Indeed, getting them to be more independent in general. In the past we have helped them, led them and guided them through their education too much, and thus many of them have not found it necessary to do much thinking on their own. We must now concentrate more and more on getting them to learn for themselves — consciously and independently. This also means encouraging them in all kinds of special interests."

A second problem was strictly political — but related to the first one. The children come from a wide variety of home backgrounds and political influences, some of them quite reactionary. Here in Berlin, which has always been hit hardest by propaganda attacks from West Berlin, the bad influences are especially strong, both on the parents and their children, who often went to West Berlin to see horror films, buy horror commics and the like; they usually got a generous and well-aimed shot of propaganda with the film or literature

Influences

The problem in school is to combat these influences, to encourage the children's belief in peace, international friendship and also socialism, but to do it in such a way that they do not feel that they are being forced to believe something, nor that they cannot come to the teacher with all kinds of political problems of a complicated kind. In the peculiar Berlin atmosphere, both before and after the recent new developments, this has been an extremely difficult job demanding sincerity, warmth and psychological understanding on the part of the teacher, who must also be in a position to answer occasional provocations which come from older children or, indirectly, from reactionary parents.

The teachers with whom I spoke felt that this problem would get easier now that the strong, vicious influence of West Berlin has been partially eliminated.

I asked about one last question — support of the schools by the government. Frau Muchow told me that this was not the problem it was in former decades and other countries. The school received every possible support — from substantial salaries for the staff to money for trips to museums and for teaching aids. While experimenting in education continues — to find ever better methods of bringing up children in a socialist society — the schools are helped in every possible way.

BERLIN NOTEBOOK

By John Peet

Various people are hastening to make money out of the so-called "West Berlin crisis". American Express in New York, for instance, is advertising special trips to Berlin "The island city behind the Iron Curtain — at no extra risk". And a big Swiss investment firm, "Arbitrex AG", has taken full page advertisements in many European papers advising investment in West Berlin stocks, using the following revealing argument:

"The lasting political tension in and around Berlin has led to a considerable decline in the stock-exchange notation of leading West Berlin stocks. It is therefore financially interesting to invest money in the front-line city of freedom."

Weird Word

I regret to report that the good grey "Times" of London seems to be slipping a bit as far as its reporting from Germany goes. Closely following upon its extremely inaccurate reply to charges made by GERMAN REPORT against Dr Hasso von Etzdorf, new West German Ambassador in London, upon which we commented at length in our issue of September 29th, the "Times" has now invented a new and very weird German word, allegedly used in the German Democratic Republic.

In its issue of October 6th, the "Times" ran a story on the town of Weimar, in the GDR. Most of it was more or less straight reporting on the historical monuments of the town, but then came this paragraph:

"A pilgrimage to Weimar ... is almost de rigeur. Innumerable Kulturgenieszbrigaden, literally 'culture absorption brigades', endlessly do the round of the old romantic haunts."

It is in fact a weird and rather revolting word, in German as in English. The only failing of the story is that the word and the conception of "Kulturgenieszbrigaden" is completely unknown in the GDR. I am still wondering how the Bonn correspondent of the "Times" dreamed it up. If I were called upon to write a testimonial for the correspondent in question, I am afraid I would fall back upon the old chestnut: "Mr So-and-so is nothing if not accurate. He is not accurate."

Fat Stock Figures

The "unsmiling, underfed people of East Berlin" have become stock figures in most of the western reports on Berlin today, so it comes almost as a shock to read in two American big-business newspapers about "overfed" and "not unhappy" East Berliners. Here are the specimens:

"At 'Budapest', the East Zone's premier wine cellar, East Berliners stare at the tourists and then go back to their own affairs. A four-piece band plays jazz. The food is heavy but good. No one looks unhappy."

(Richard C. Wald in the "New York Herald Tribune", October 14th)

"If anything, the people of East Germany are overweight, compulsive eaters. Everywhere, it seems, people are stuffing themselves with food, which is both plentiful and cheap ... At least 16 out of 20 people seem overweight. And in any café people eat and drink as though it were their last meal. And this was not just the case for those who ate in restaurants. In stores, too, food appeared plentiful and at prices commensurate with those in West Germany."

(Joachim Joester in "San Francisco Sunday Chronicle", October 8th)

Blind Eye

A kind friend in Madras regularly sends us an odd little periodical called "Weekly German News", the official bulletin of the West German Embassy in New Delhi.

This bulletin is, as one might expect, filled with misleading information, but I found nothing out of the ordinary run until the issue of August 26th landed on my desk. This issue devoted two full pages to what looked at first sight like a useful chronological account of developments in the Berlin problem since 1945. When I examined it more closely, however, I discovered that it qualified for the first award this year of GERMAN REPORT's special "Nelson's Blind Eye" medal.

Here are a few of the reasons for this rare award:

The chronology starts off like this: "May 2 1945 — Capitulation of the German troops in Berlin". The fact that it was capitulation to the Red Army, after weeks of ferocious fighting, is not mentioned. "July 4 — American and British troops march in to occupy their respective sectors of the German capital". Who had been there for the previous two months? The Red Army, but this is quietly forgotten.

Now let us turn to the year 1948. This West German chronology states: "June 23 — Soviet Marshal Sokolowski orders a separate currency reform for the Soviet-occupied zone of Germany and Berlin." It is a perfectly correct statement: but the chronology ignores the fact that the western powers had ordered a separate currency reform for West Germany five days earlier, and that the Soviet measure was an unavoidable protective measure, since devalued old Reichsmarks were flooding into East Germany from the west and threatening to wreck the entire economy.

The three examples which I have given show that this apparently "objective" historical summary is in fact a wildly misleading propaganda trick. I have devoted so much attention to it here since the same listing has probably been used in other West German propaganda sheets in other parts of the world, and is liable to be accepted as historical fact by people who do not have the real facts at their disposal.

Soporific Dad

Every evening, at five minutes to seven, the TV service of the GDR transmits a delightful five minute "get the kids to bed" programme, introduced by a bearded dwarf puppet "The Sandman". My daughter Miriam, aged five, is one of his fans. Every few days the writer of these notes appears about half an hour later on the screen with a report on what the press of the world is saying.

A few days ago I said goodbye to Miriam and told her that I was off to the TV studio to do my stint. She thought hard for a moment, and then said: "That's right, isn't it, daddy. You are a sort of Sandman for grown-ups."

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